

CLAIMS

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1. A sweetening composition comprising:
at least one sweetening agent selected from the group
consisting of polyol, monosaccharide, disaccharide, and combinations thereof;
and

inulin, which comprises at least about 25 percent by weight of
the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin.

2. The composition of claim 1, wherein said polyol is selected from
the group consisting of xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, mannitol, isomalt, isomaltitol,
lactitol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates, glycerol, propylene glycol,
erythritol, galactitol, and combinations thereof.

3. The composition of claim 1, wherein said polyol is selected from
the group consisting of xylitol, sorbitol, maltitol, mannitol, and combinations
thereof.

4. The composition of claim 1, wherein said polyol is selected from
the group consisting of xylitol, sorbitol, and a combination thereof.

5. The composition of claim 1, wherein said polyol is xylitol.

6. The composition of claim 1, in which said sweetening agent
further comprises a polysaccharide containing at least three monosaccharide
units.

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7. The composition of claim 1, wherein said monosaccharide is
selected from the group consisting of glyceraldehyde, erythrose, threose,
ribose, arabinose, xylose, lyxose, allose, altrose, glucose, mannose, gulose,
idose, galactose, talose, dihydroxyacetone, erythrulose, ribulose, xylulose,
psicose, fructose, sorbose, tagatose, and combinations thereof.

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8. The composition of claim 1, wherein said monosaccharide is selected from the group consisting of fructose, glucose, and a combination thereof.

9. The composition of claim 1, wherein said monosaccharide comprises fructose.

10. The composition of claim 1, wherein said disaccharide is selected from the group consisting of maltose, lactose, sucrose, isomaltulose, maltulose, isomaltose, cellobiose, and combinations thereof.

11. The composition of claim 1, wherein said disaccharide comprises maltose.

12. The composition of claim 1, wherein said disaccharide comprises lactose.

13. A sweetening composition comprising:
a sweetening agent comprising fructose; and
inulin, which comprises at least about 25 percent by weight of the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin.

14. The composition of claim 13, wherein said sweetening agent further comprises xylitol.

15. The composition of any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein said inulin comprises at least about 30 percent by weight of the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin.

16. The composition of any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein said inulin comprises at least about 35 percent by weight of the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin.

17. The composition of any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein said inulin comprises at least about 40 percent by weight of the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin.

18. The composition of any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein said inulin comprises polysaccharides having molecular weights up to and including about 2288, in an amount of at least 75 percent by weight of said inulin.

19. The composition of any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein said inulin comprises polysaccharides having molecular weights above about 2288, in an amount of at least 75 percent by weight of said inulin.

20. A sweetening composition comprising:
a sweetening agent comprising at least one polyol selected from the group consisting of xylitol, sorbitol, and a combination thereof; and
inulin, which comprises at least about 25 percent by weight of the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin.

21. A sweetening composition comprising:
a sweetening agent comprising lactose and fructose; and
inulin, which comprises at least about 25 percent by weight of the combination of said sweetening agent and said inulin.

22. A sweetening composition comprising:
a sweetening agent comprising lactose and xylitol; and
inulin, which comprises at least about 25 percent by weight of the combination of said sweetening agent and said inulin.

23. A foodstuff comprising a sweetening composition as recited in any one of claims 1, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22 or 23.

24. A foodstuff comprising a sweetening composition as recited in any one of claims 1, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22 or 23, wherein said foodstuff is selected from the group consisting of gum, candy, ice cream, cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, cake, cookies and beverages.

25. The composition of any one of claims 1, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22 or 23, wherein said sweetening agent further comprises at least one intense sweetener.

26. A method for preparing a foodstuff comprised of a plurality of ingredients, said method comprising:

(a) combining a first of said ingredients with at least one sweetening agent selected from the group consisting of polyol, monosaccharide, disaccharide, and combinations thereof; and

(b) combining a second of said ingredients with inulin in an amount which comprises at least about 25 percent by weight of the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin; wherein said first and said second of said ingredients are either the same ingredient or else different ingredients.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said foodstuff is selected from the group consisting of candy, ice cream, cake, cookies and beverages.

28. A method for preparing a foodstuff, said method comprising: adding to said foodstuff:

(i) at least one sweetening agent selected from the group consisting of polyol, monosaccharide, disaccharide, and combinations thereof; and

(ii) inulin, which comprises at least about 25 percent by weight of the combination of said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin; wherein

said at least one sweetening agent and said inulin are added to said foodstuff either in combination at the same time, or else in separate portions at different times.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said foodstuff is selected from the group consisting of candy, ice cream, cheese, cottage cheese, milk, cake, cookies and beverages.